

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12
IO-13 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07 SOE-02 DOE-11 CEQ-01
/120 W

-----076519 011818Z /43

P 011546Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2149
INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY ROME
USNMR SHAPE

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 1085

USNMR SHAPE FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC, NATO, NPG, NL
SUBJECT: DUTCH VIEWS ON THE ENHANCED RADIATION/REDUCED BLAST
WEAPON (ER/RB)

REF: A) THE HAGUE 984 (DTG 241422Z FEB 78) (NOTAL)
B) THE HAGUE 614 (DTG 071027Z FEB 78)

1. SUMMARY: THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE ON ER/RB ENDED WITH THE
FAILURE OF BOTH OPPOSITION AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT MOTIONS,
LEAVING GON RELATIVELY FREE HAND IN FURTHER NATO DISCUSSIONS.
DEBATE, HOWEVER, UNDERScoreD NEGATIVE PARLIAMENTARY FEELINGS
ABOUT ER/RB AND FONMIN VAN DER KLAUW IN EFFECT FINDS HIMSELF
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COMMITTED TO CONSULT WITH PARLIAMENT ON FUTURE STEPS. END
SUMMARY.

2. EARLY THIS MORNING THE SECOND CHAMBER CONCLUDED ANNUAL
DEBATE ON NATO AND DEFENSE ISSUES. FOCUS WAS ON ER/RB AND
DEMONSTRATED ANEW DEEP RESERVATIONS--RANGING FROM UNEASY
MISGIVINGS BY THE LIBERALS TO OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION ON THE PART

OF THE SOCIALISTS. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ALSO WENT ON RECORD AS OPPOSING INTRODUCTION OF ER/RB INTO THE NATO DEFENSE SYSTEM, THOUGH THEY LEFT OPEN POSSIBILITY OF TRADE IN MBFR CONTEXT.

3. TWO MOTIONS CRITICAL OF ER/RB FAILED TO GET MAJORITY. ONE, BY FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER STEMERDINK (SOCIALIST), EXPRESSING OUTRIGHT OPPOSITION, WAS DEFEATED BY 64-78, WITH COALITION CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND LIBERALS VOTING AGAINST. THE OTHER, A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT MOTION, EXPRESSING OPPOSITION TO THE WEAPON BUT SEEKING TO INTRODUCE IT INTO EAST-WEST ARMS CONTROL ALSO FAILED, FOR LACK OF LIBERAL SUPPORT. THE RESULT IS THAT, EVEN THOUGH THERE IS A CLEAR MAJORITY IN THE CHAMBER OPPOSING ER/RB, THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDS ARE NOT TIED AND GON RETAINS FLEXIBILITY IN NATO DISCUSSIONS.

4. UNLIKE LAST WEEK, WHEN THERE WAS OPEN DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN DEFMIN KRUISINGW AND FONMIN VAN DER KLAUW, BOTH MINISTERS MANAGED, THOUGH SHAKILY, TO MAINTAIN A UNITED FRONT. FRUISINGA DID NOT HIDE HIS PERSONAL OPPOSITION TO THE WEAPON BUT STAUNCHLY MAINTAINED THIS POSITION WAS CONSISTENT WITH THAT OF THE CABINET. VAN DER KLAUW, OFTEN HESITATING AND STILL VERY ILL AT EASE UNDER HEAVY OPPOSITION QUESTIONING, ARGUED FOR NEGOTIATING FLEXIBILITY WITHIN THE ALLIANCE.

5. COMMENT: THOUGH AS A RESULT OF SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTED TURN
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OF PARLIAMENTARY MANEUVERING THE CHAMBER DID NOT EXPRESS ANY FORMAL VIEW, IT LEFT NO DOUBT ABOUT THE DEPTH OF UNEASE WHICH THE ER/RB ISSUE HAS CAUSED HERE SINCE LAST SUMMER. THOUGH OUR MFA CONTACTS HEAVED A SIGH OF RELIEF WHEN IT BECAME CLEAR THAT NEITHER OF THE MOTIONS WOULD CARRY, VAN DER KLAUW'S LATITUDE WILL NEVERTHELESS REMAIN HEAVILY CIRCUMSCRIBED, NOT ONLY BY THE WIDE MEASURE OF OPPOSITION TO ER/RB BUT ALSO BY HIS COMMITMENT TO CONSULT WITH PARLIAMENT ON NEXT STEPS AS ALLIANCE CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUE UNFOLDS. AS WAS THE CASE AFTER THE ALMELO DEBATE (THE HAGUE 542, NOTAL), VAN DER KLAUW HAS NOW IN EFFECT CONCEDED TO PARLIAMENT AN ONGOING ROLE IN THE POLICY-MAKING PROCESS ON THIS ISSUE. WHILE IT MAY HAVE BEEN NATURAL FOR HIM IN THE HEAT OF THE DEBATE TO UNDERTAKE FURTHER CONSULTATIONS WITH THE CHAMBER, HE MAY COME TO REGRET HIS CONYEQUENT LOSS OF FREEDOM.
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